REMARKS

The Office Action mailed January 23, 2007, has been received and reviewed. The Office Action asserts that two inventions are claimed in the application. The first invention (Group I) being drawn to a method of forming an ear or nose plug, and corresponding to claims 1 to 11, and the second invention (Group II) being drawn to an ear or nose plug as a product. Applicant respectfully affirm the provisional election of Group I, claims 1-11.

The Specification stands objected to for informalities. The specification has been amended to correct the cited typographical errors. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4-8, and 11 stand rejected as allegedly being unpatentable over Lampe in view of Ahn *et al.* Applicant respectfully disagrees. As the Office notes (page 4 of the Office Action), Lampe does not teach that the mixture parts are equal, as recited in claim 1. The Office then asserts that Ahn *et al.* teaches mixing equal parts and that it would have been obvious that the mixture parts of Lampe could be balanced equally in the manner of Ahn *et al.* However, both Lampe and Ahn *et al.* teach silicone compositions having a long cure time. For example, Lampe describes a composition that "[a]fter one hour the silicone rubber mixture cures to approximately 80 percent of the final Shore A hardness" (col. 10, lines 4-6), and Ahn *et al.* teaches that "the silicone composition typically cures in less than about one hour at 150° C" (paragraph 103). In

sharp contrast, the present invention has a short cure time. For example, claim 10 recites that the "time to cure comprises waiting at least about 3 to 5 minutes measured from beginning of the mixing." Therefore, to produce a quick curing rubber ear or nose plug a person of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the slow cure time compositions of Ahn *et al.* with the slow cure time of Lampe. As a result, there is no proper motivation to combine the references.

Furthermore, Ahn *et al.* teach silicone compositions "having unexpectedly improved adhesion to plastic substrates ..." (emphasis added, paragraph 107). Thus, Ahn *et al.* teaches away from ear and nose plugs, since it is highly undesirable to an ear or nose plug adhere to the user during curing. Therefore, the adhesive compositions of Ahn *et al.* are not applicable to formation of ear or nose plugs. Since Ahn *et al.* teaches away from a silicone rubber useful in the construction of an ear or nose plug, it is improper to combine this reference with Lampe.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 3, 9 and 10 stand rejected as allegedly being unpatentable over Lampe in view of Ahn *et al.* and Onohara *et al.* Applicant notes that Onohara *et al.* teaches that "it is absolutely necessary in the present invention that, for strong adhesion to thermoplastic resins ..." (col. 7, lines 41-448). Therefore, both Ahn *et al.* and Onohara *et al.* teach away from a silicone rubber base to conform to the ear or nose cavity. Thus, Onohara *et al.* does not overcome the shortcomings of Ahn *et al.* and Lampe.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Should questions exist after consideration of the foregoing, the Office is kindly requested to contact the applicant's attorney at the address or telephone number given herein.

Respectfully submitted,

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